

## **AdvoServ Testimony on Connecticut H.B. 6490**

**March 4, 2015**

Co-Chairs Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee.

My name is Bob Bacon and I am the Chief Operating Officer for AdvoServ. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 6490 and to introduce AdvoServ and our programs to you. We hope that AdvoServ and our 43 years of experience serving individuals with Autism and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities may benefit Connecticut and its citizens.

In brief, our mission is to fill a critical need for services to individuals with the most complex behavioral and medical challenges with Autism and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. These complex behavioral and medical challenges include severe aggression, self injury and property damage. These individuals often inflict serious harm to themselves and others, require the greatest resources at the highest costs, and are most likely to attract attention from legal, advocacy and media sources.

Services for these individuals are extremely difficult to arrange because they require high levels of professional expertise, a lengthy record of high quality services and strong financial stability. AdvoServ's singular mission for over forty five years has been to provide the highest quality clinical care to individuals with the most significant needs, while providing substantial cost savings to the states in which we operate. As a qualified provider, we believe that AdvoServ can assist Connecticut in serving its most vulnerable citizens at a considerable cost savings.

We appreciate the legislature's support for the Department of Developmental Services and its mission to serve both children and adults with Autism and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Even with the best of intentions and efforts by the Department, our understanding is that Connecticut serves many of its

most challenging individuals in state centers , out-of-state placements and through recurrent emergency medical services, or they remain on an emergency or crisis waiting list because appropriate services are not available from agencies willing or able to provide for such intensive supports and services.

We believe that House Bill 6490 takes a major step toward meeting the needs of these most vulnerable citizens and that it is imperative that the legislature provide DDS with a Pilot program to bring needed services to Connecticut citizens with the highest needs and vulnerabilities.

Last year, under a similar proposed bill, H.B. 5558, forty-four parents/families submitted testimony in support of a similar proposed bill and shared their personal experiences in coping with difficulties directly resulting from the lack of appropriate services available for individuals with intensive support needs under the current system. Many are still in need of these services today.

It is important to acknowledge that the cost of the Pilot will be offset by associated savings. DDS estimates an annual cost of \$152,000 per individual, however, this cost will be offset by significant savings. We know the current cost of treating the 29 individuals out-of-state to be \$2.5 Million from the Office of Fiscal Analysis, but do not know the cost of hospitalization and other emergency medical services for individuals on the waiting list. Collectively, we are certain the cost to the state under the current services is greater than treating these individuals in state under the Pilot program. Serving high-need intensive individuals is expensive. However, providing these services in Connecticut, rather than out state or through emergency medical services allows the State to recoup 50% of the cost through its Medicaid Waiver program. Ultimately, the Pilot program could represent a savings of over \$2 Million annually through federal subsidies. Additionally, the out-of-state placements send Connecticut taxpayer dollars to another state.

We thank the sponsors for their leadership on this Bill and encourage your support to meet the needs of people with Autism and Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities. We further thank all of you for this opportunity to be here today.